

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association

3840 Spurgin Road

Missoula, MT 59804

2. Type of Proposed Action: Range Improvements –(1) Install handicapped accessible toilet at 1000 yd. range and campground (3) Extend cover on 1000 yd. range (4) Install drop ceiling on indoor range (5) Install steel sides on storage building (6) Build pavilion behind 1000 yd. range (7) Implement timber management on ranges.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association has two sites: (1) The Deep Creek Site approximately 100 acres located on Fish, Wildlife & Parks leased property adjacent to the Deep Creek State Recreation Area about seven miles Northwest of Missoula, MT. (2) East Missoula (indoor) range, which is an indoor small bore range located off of Highway 200 east of Missoula.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)

5. Need for the Action(s): (1) **Install handicapped accessible toilet at 1000 yd. range & Campground-** Shooters have no toilet accessible on the 500 meter silhouette and 1000 yard pit area. During competitions and other shooting sessions can be for a considerable length of time. This will give shooters on the 500-meter silhouette and 1000-yard pit area access to a handicap accessible toilet; also the camping area has need for a new handicap accessible toilet.

(2) Extend cover on 100 yd. range – Range use is expanding which increases the need for more shooting positions, a cleaning/maintenance area and a temporary rifle storage. This will make all shooting positions on the 1000-yard range fully accessible year round and in all weather, improving safety and accessibility. Add one more needed firing position; accommodate three cleaning tables and temporary rifle storage. **(3) Install drop Ceiling on indoor range** - Current ceiling is old. The new drop ceiling will still be installed below the old ceiling, which will better incorporate the existing lighting and enhance operations of the new fan system exhausting possible lead in the air. New ceiling also further improves noise dampening. Ceiling tiles have been tested for asbestos content by Northern Analytical Laboratories, Inc. and determined to be none detected on October 14, 2005.



Photo 1 - Example of deteriorating ceiling at indoor range.

(4) Install steel sides on storage building - Current storage shed is deteriorating and also needs improved security. Adding new steel rib siding will improve both concerns. **(5) Build pavilion behind 1000 yd. range** – There is no facility available on the 1000 yard range for safety briefings, instruction, shooter preparation, shooter maintenance, competitive shooting administration, registration, scoring, etc. or other group activities that may need to occur here.

(6) Implement timber management on ranges – Unauthorized personnel or livestock entering the range through cut or broken fences, especially on OHVs, prevent a safety hazard in some areas as they may be obscured from firing line by trees. The number of trees and new growth are also increasing the potential hazards from wildfire. Larger trees either dead or with larger dead limbs can pose additional hazards. Timber management will allow removal of hazardous trees, ladder fuels, and permit tree thinning. The intent is not to remove all trees as they provide necessary shade and can provide additional safety buffer between ranges and behind berms. Only those trees that would increase safety risks or inhibit maintenance and accessibility on the range would be removed or trimmed in consultation with FWP Wildlife Division.



Photo 2 - Example of timber growth (background) limiting access, obscuring safety visibility and increasing potential for wildlife.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The objectives for the proposed projects answer the needs stated in item 5. Consequently, these projects expand range use and accessibility, improve available facilities, and/or improve safety, security and human health.

7. Map:

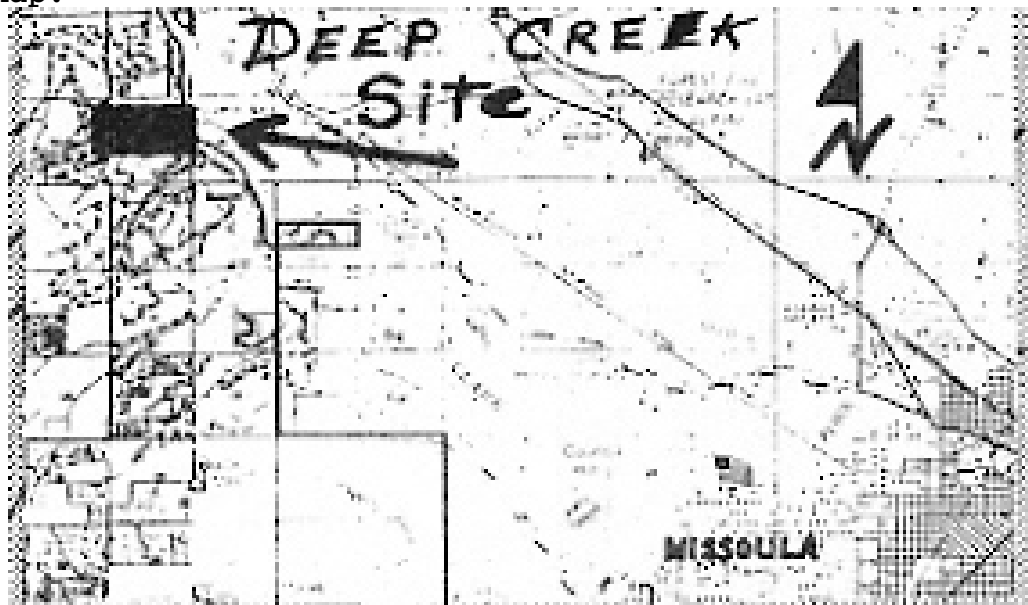


Figure 1 - Deep Creek Outdoor Range Site northwest of Missoula

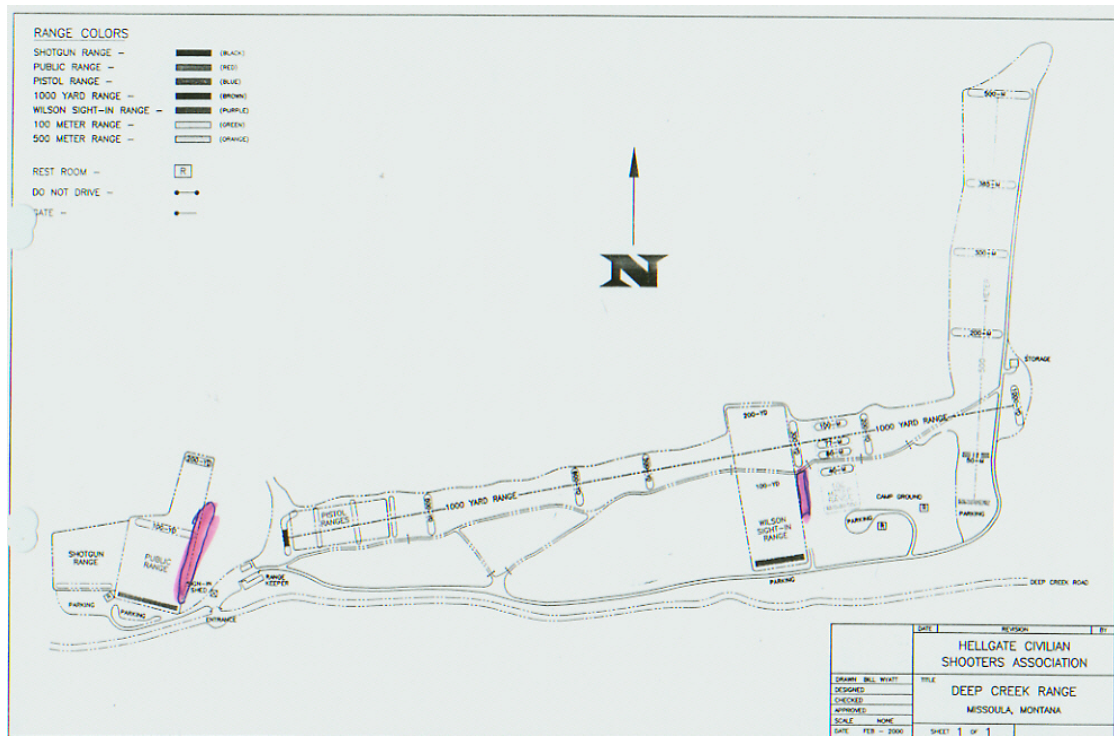


Figure 2 - Deep Creek Range Complex. Pink indicates area or berm

improvements.

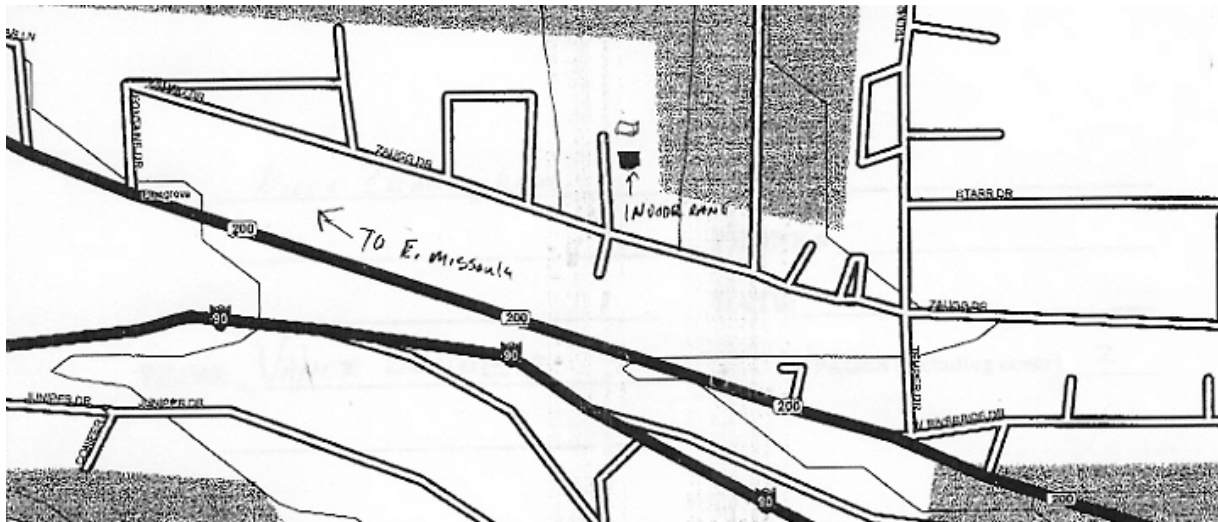


Figure 3 - Indoor Range located off of Hwy 200 east of Missoula

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

The property is leased from the Montana department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks and is administered by the Region 4 Parks Division and is 100 acres.

| | Acre | | Acre |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|
| (a) Developed: | | (d) Floodplain | _____ |
| residential | _____ | (e) Productive: | |
| industrial | _____ | irrigated cropland | _____ |
| (b) Open | <u>100</u> | dry cropland | _____ |
| (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas | _____ | forestry | _____ |
| | | rangeland | _____ |
| | | other | _____ |

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

All but one of the projects is on an existing open shooting range in a forested area of predominantly Ponderosa Pine. Most of the range area is heavily forested with new growth. There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands. Project 4 is on an indoor range.

10. Description of Project: Project numbers below are the Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association project numbers.

1. Continued growth of competition activities yard pit area by men and women, increases the need for a handicapped accessible toilets at the 1,000 range and campground. Estimated cost is \$13,000.
2. Build a north extension on the 1000-yard cover to add a shooting bench, three cleaning tables and temporary rifle storage. Total material cost about \$1257.76 in receipts plus \$250 for steel roofing and \$1050 labor cost. Total cost is \$2557.76.
3. Secure falling ceiling and install drop ceiling in the lobby of the indoor range, 22 rim fire, at the West Riverside range. Material cost is about \$1500 and the labor cost is \$1,000. Total is \$2500.
4. Installing delta rib steel on the sides of the storage building. Material cost estimate \$1500 and the labor cost of \$640. total coast \$2,140
5. Build a pavilion behind the 100-yard shooting line for shooter safety briefings, instruction, shooter preparation or maintenance, competitive shooting administration, registration, scoring, or other shooter group activities that may need to occur here. Total costs estimate \$4466.76.
6. Timber management for the next 5 years of operations to allow for the removal of hazardous trees, ladder fuels, and permit tree thinning. The intent is not to remove all trees as they provide necessary shade and additional safety buffer between ranges. Only those trees that would increase safety risks inhibit maintenance and accessibility or limit visibility on the range would be removed or trimmed. All future timber management practices implemented will be with the coordination and approval of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

In Accordance with contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2007, with the exception of the Timber Management project that will be based on a 5-year management plan working closely with FWP Wildlife biologist.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Permit</u> | <u>Date Filed/#</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | None | |

Funding:

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Funding Amount</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
|--------------------|-----------------------|

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks | \$12,332.50 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|

(Does not include a 50/50 match from the Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association).

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: FWP- Hunter Education Program, 4-H Club, Missoula County

Sheriff's Dept., Montana Highway Patrol, Missoula City Police Department, and FWP Game Wardens .

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Scoping was internal between the Association and Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 2

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Vance Bennett
306 Railroad Ste 110
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 728-3916

16. Other Pertinent Information:

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: March 11, 2005

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

| Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to: | Unknown | Potentially Significant | Minor | None | Can Be Mitigated | Comments Below |
|---|---------|-------------------------|-------|------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources | | | | X | | |
| 2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats | | | | X | | X |
| 3. Introduction of new species into an area | | | | X | | |
| 4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality | | | | X | | |
| 5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater) | | | | X | | X |
| 6. Existing water right or reservation | | | | X | | |
| 7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture | | | | X | | |
| 8. Air quality or objectionable odors | | | | X | | |
| 9. Historical & archaeological sites | | | | X | | |
| 10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy | | | | X | | |
| 11. Aesthetics | | | | X | | |

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment .

| Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to: | Unknown | Potentially Significant | Minor | None | Can Be Mitigated | Comments Below |
|--|---------|-------------------------|-------|------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Social structures and cultural diversity | | | | X | | |
| 2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat | | | | X | | |
| 3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue | | | | X | | |
| 4. Agricultural production | | | | X | | X |
| 5. Human health | | | | X | | X |
| 6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income | | | | X | | |
| 7. Access to & quality of recreational activities | | | | X | | X |
| 8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances) | | | | X | | |
| 9. Distribution & density of population and housing | | | | X | | |
| 10. Demands for government services | | | | X | | |
| 11. Industrial and/or commercial activity | | | | X | | |

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. This site is adjacent to the national forest lands that have cattle leases and timber harvest operations on the forest. Adjacent area is used primarily for recreation.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. A very comprehensive safety plan and well-posted safety guidelines are in evidence throughout the range complex.

7. Range will provide year round access and handicapped accessibility and provides a public use range. Cooperating organizations are aware of the improved range options and the has a long history or cooperation with hunter education classes, 4-H, Sheriff's Department, Game Wardens, local police departments and other law enforcement & youth groups for training and instructional facilities. A public range is provided and range facilities are handicapped accessible.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects that are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the proposed alternative for range improvements, such as increased recreational opportunities, increased safety, increased handicap access and decreased wildfire potential. The no action alternative would be not to make improvements and continue on with present activities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities also include occasional shooting activities on existing or other temporary ranges. However, entire outdoor range may not be handicap accessible and will have the increased potential for destructive wildfires. Indoor range may have ceiling deteriorating to the point of making the range usable. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations): NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Vance Bennett, Director Deep Creek Range

Roger Hinthner, Secretary/Treasurer, Hellgate Civilian Shooters Ass'n.

Lee Bastion, Regional Park Manager, Region 2 FWP

Bob Henderson, Regional Biologist, Region 2 FWP

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None

of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/altere d areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The long history of a strong working relationship that the Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association has with hunter education, youth groups, local law enforcement and the public provided ranges, all indicate support of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the improvements of the range complex of the Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: September 4, 2005

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any: Project will be advertised in the *Missoulian*.